IMPACT OF CONFLICT, ATTACHMENT STYLE AND PARENTAL BONDING ON IMPOSTER PHENOMENON AMONG YOUNG ADULTS

This dissertation is submitted for the partial fulfillment of the degree of M.Sc. in APPLIED PSYCHOLOGY (Specialization in Clinical Psychology)

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled " Impact of Conflict, Attachment style, Parental bonding on Imposter Phenomenon among young adults…" , submitted by Siuli khatun, a 2nd year M.Sc student in Clinical Psychology, Sister Nivedita University, is as bonafide work, which may be placed before the board of examiners for their evaluation. This is in partial fulfilment for the Degree of M.Sc in Clinical Psychology, Sister Nivedita University.

This is an original study done by the candidate and has not been submitted by her before any form for any other degree of this University or any other university.

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PLAGIARISM DECLARATION

"I , **SIULI KHATUN** , hereby declare that the research work titled, " Impact of Conflict,Attachment style, and Parental bonding on Imposter Phenomenon among young adults", conducted by me, has been completed with full honesty and integrity. I confirm that the work is original , and all sources of information have been appropriately acknowledged and cited."

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the present study was to investigate the effect of conflict (related to family, sex, interpersonal relationships, and self-concept), attachment style and parental bonding, on imposter phenomenon among young adults. A total of 90 participants were selected using purposive sampling from various departments of Sister Nivedita University. Standardized tools, including the Sacks Sentence Completion Test (SSCT), the Clance Impostor Phenomenon Scale (CIPS), and the Parental Bonding Instrument (PBI), were administered. Descriptive and inferential statistics, including the Mann-Whitney U test and Spearman's rank-order correlations, were used to analyze the data via SPSS.

The findings revealed significant positive correlations between imposter phenomenon and conflict related to self-concept, family, interpersonal relationships, and sex. Anxious and avoidant attachment styles were also significantly associated with imposter feelings, while secure attachment showed no such relationship. Parental overprotection, particularly from fathers, positively predicted imposterism, whereas paternal care demonstrated a small but significant negative relationship. No significant gender differences were found in imposter scores, though males reported higher levels of secure attachment. The study highlights the potential mediating role of self-esteem in the development of imposter feelings and emphasizes the impact of early attachment and parenting patterns on self-concept and psychological well-being.

Keywords: Imposter Phenomenon, Conflict, Attachment style, Parental bonding.

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Over the past several decades, there have been notable changes in the developmental paths of young adults between the ages of 18 and 25 (Arnett, 2000). Young adults are especially susceptible to negative emotions, especially those making the transition from adolescence to adulthood, because they frequently deal with demands pertaining to social interactions, professional development, academic achievement, and identity construction. Feelings of inadequacy can be greatly exacerbated by the internal tension these experiences create, which can lead to diminished self-confidence and mental health issues. This kind of identity conflict can be a barrier to starting a career, which is often accompanied by feelings of emotional chaos and a decline in self-efficacy (Polach, 2004). These feelings bring to mind the idea of the imposter phenomenon (IP; Clance & Imes, 1978), a theoretical framework that has garnered significant scholarly interest within the domains of higher education and psychological inquiry (e.g., Bernard, Dollinger, & Ramaniah, 2002; Cowman & Ferrari, 2002; Gibson-Beverly & Schwartz, 2008; Royse-Roskowski, 2010; Sonnak & Towell, 2001).

Research pertaining to the impostor phenomenon was initially undertaken during the late 1970s and 1980s (Clance and Imes, 1978); since that time, the notion of the impostor phenomenon (IP) has been attracting an increasing amount of scientific scrutiny and has been gaining traction within the broader societal discourse.

CONCEPT OF IMPOSTER PHENOMENON:

The phenomenon known as the "Impostor Phenomenon" was initially articulated by Dr. Pauline Clance, based on her empirical observations within a clinical framework (Clance, 1985).The definition of the Impostor Phenomenon from Clance (1985) refers to an “internal experience of intellectual phoniness” (Matthews & Clance, 1985, p. 71) in individuals who are highly successful but unable to internalise their success (Bernard, Dollinger, & Ramaniah, 2002; Clance & Imes, 1978). Clance postulated that the Impostor Phenomenon is not “a pathological disease that is inherently self-damaging or self-destructive” (Clance, 1985, p. 23); rather, it disrupts the psychological well-being of an individual.

High achievers are particularly susceptible to the phenomena, which can result in elevated levels of tension, anxiety, and self-doubt (Clance & Imes, 1978). According to Clance and Imes (1978), IP is the word used to characterize a feeling of inadequacy in the face of competence. IP sufferers find it difficult to accept their successes and feel inferior to their peers (Leary, Patton, Orlando, & Funk, 2000). According to Clance and Imes (1978), IP also encourages feelings of dishonesty, making people think that their abilities are overstated and that others will eventually discover their incapacity (Clance & Imes, 1978; Fried-Buchalter, 1997; Gibson-Beverly & Schwartz, 2008).

According to the original IP explanation (Clance and Imes, 1978), a person's learning history, beginning in childhood, in terms of developmental lessons of correlation and causality,

determines how imposter sentiments emerge. They first noticed this phenomena in women who achieved great success, but they eventually realized that it was common across all demographic groups, occupations, and genders. People who go through it frequently believe that they are not competent at their employment or that their accomplishments are the result of luck, chance, being in the right location, knowing the right person, or personal charm rather than their own abilities (Clance & Imes, 1978). As a result, individuals fear that they could be exposed as "frauds." People with impostor phenomenon (IP) tendencies often struggle to accept praise or recognition for their achievements. Instead, they tend to fixate on criticism, using it to reinforce their sense of inadequacy or failure. They become overly focused on their perceived flaws and are deeply afraid of the shame or embarrassment that might come with making mistakes. Additionally, they frequently overvalue other people's intelligence and abilities, comparing their own weaknesses to others' strengths.

Cognitive-Affective Models of the Imposter Phenomenon:

Clance and Imes (1978) initially described the imposter phenomenon as a psychological pattern where individuals, despite evident success, fear being exposed as frauds. This phenomenon is characterized by attributing success to external factors like luck, while internalizing failures. Cognitive distortions—such as all-or-nothing thinking, perfectionism, and self-comparison—contribute to the maintenance of imposter feelings (Kolligian & Sternberg, 1991).These thought patterns are often rooted in early familial environments that emphasized achievement, conditional acceptance, or comparison with others, aligning closely with poor parental bonding and insecure attachment.

Self-Discrepancy Theory:

Higgins (1987) proposed that emotional distress arises when discrepancies exist between three components of the self: actual self, ideal self, and ought self. When individuals perceive that they are not meeting internal or external expectations, they experience anxiety, guilt, or shame. For young adults under academic or social pressure, such self-discrepancies can manifest as imposter feelings.

CONFLICT:

When a person discovers that the objectives entrusted to him are incompatible with his own abilities and role, intrapersonal conflict arises. Intrapersonal conflict refers to the psychological tension an individual experiences when they face conflicting desires, thoughts, emotions, or goals within themselves. This internal struggle can manifest in various forms, such as cognitive dissonance (when a person holds contradictory beliefs), self-doubt, and ambivalence. Intrapersonal conflict often arises when individuals are confronted with choices that challenge their values or identity, resulting in emotional distress, anxiety, or feelings of inadequacy.

One common cause of intrapersonal conflict is the disparity between an individual’s ideal self and actual self, or the mismatch between their desires and reality. This internal discord can be

rooted in unresolved childhood issues, identity crises, or attachment problems, and it often leads to psychological distress

Intrapersonal conflict is defined by Bazerman et al. (1998) as a difference between one's desires and one's responsibilities. Intrapersonal conflicts arise from one's thoughts and feelings, both positive and negative, about a particular attitude or item. This type of conflict involves a person's values, ideas, principles and emotions. People with intrapersonal conflict may doubt their ability and self-worth. Intrapersonal conflict, characterized by internal struggles such as self-doubt, fear of failure, and perfectionism, can significantly contribute to the development of the impostor phenomenon.

PERSPECTIVE OF CONFLICT:

The conflict between a person's motives, feelings, wants, interests, and behaviors is referred to as intrapersonal conflict (Haig, 2006). One person's consciousness is where all conflict situations take place (Colman et al., 2016).

The primary method used in psychoanalysis to manage intrapersonal conflict is the biopsychological approach (Polster, 2015).A severe psychological struggle between desires that are supported by certain aspects of the personality and denied by others who have their own desires is known as intrapersonal conflict (Johnson, Barnett, Elman, Forrest, & Kaslow, 2013). Because intrapersonal conflict mostly occurs at the unconscious level, according to Jung's (1954) theory, it causes regressive personality changes (Fried, 2015). According to Horney (1945), the drive to fulfill one's ambitions is the root cause of intrapersonal conflict, and the result of neurotic goals is eventually annoyance for those around the individual (Workman & Reader, 2014). According to humanistic psychology, intrapersonal conflict arises from a poor evaluation of oneself on both the conscious (a lifelong attitude) and unconscious levels (Workman & Reader, 2014).

This is based on Rogers' notion from 1959. Maslow (1954) asserted that the failure to meet one's desires for self-actualization is the fundamental source of internal conflict (Hatchard et al., 2017). Conversely, Frankl (1946) believes that the loss of life purpose is the root cause of intrapersonal conflict (Geller, 2017). According to cognitive psychology, cognitive dissonance causes discomfort and tries to eradicate it, which in turn leads to intrapersonal conflict (Chiesa & Serretti, 2010). According to behaviorists, intrapersonal conflict might be a result of poor parenting, impatience, or a series of behavioral reactions to a challenge (Coffey et al., 2017).When someone is caught between pursuing steady employment and a passionate but uncertain desire, for instance, they may experience intrapersonal conflict. The effects of these conflicts can range from temporary stress to long-term psychological anguish, and they can be either temporary or persistent.

Individuals experiencing the imposter phenomenon may feel conflicted between their external success and their internal sense of inadequacy. This internal contradiction—where they are simultaneously aware of their accomplishments but fail to accept them as legitimate—creates ongoing psychological distress. These individuals may also have

difficulty reconciling the fear of failure with their need for approval, and this conflict can drive them to constantly overachieve while feeling inadequate at the same time.

Family and Interpersonal Conflict:

Family Systems Theory (Bowen, 1978) asserts that unresolved familial conflict, role confusion, and emotional enmeshment can lead to psychological distress and identity issues. Continuous exposure to family, interpersonal, and sexual relationship conflict during adolescence or young adulthood can impair emotional regulation and heighten self-doubt. Intrapersonal or self-concept conflict, often arising during identity formation in young adulthood, may involve contradictions between perceived and desired self-attributes. These conflicts are known to intensify negative self-evaluation and foster imposter-related thoughts (Cokley et al., 2017). The imposter phenomenon may be a result of perfectionism or high self-expectations, which often emerge from early childhood experiences. Insecure parental bonding, particularly overprotection or neglect, can lead to individuals developing an excessive reliance on external validation and perfectionistic standards to compensate for self-doubt. This creates an emotional tension between the desire for success and the fear of failure or exposure as "fraudulent."

According to Safarzadeh, Esfahaniasl, and Bayat (2012), a person's self-concept has a significant role in the development of their propensity for feeling like a fraud or impostor syndrome. In predicting impostor feelings, Caselman et al. (2006) found that social support, self-worth, and self-concept explained less than half of the variance. According to Sincero (2012), one's self-concept is the culmination of all of their beliefs, interests, and ways of thinking arranged logically toward themselves. To put it more simply, self-concept is the way we view ourselves and how we believe we should feel, think, and act in various positions in life. Strong self-concepts also result in feelings of competence and ability, which are mirrored in behavior. As a result, other people think and respond positively, which further strengthens one's sense of competence (Jerajani, 2006). On the other hand, low self-esteem, a lot of self-criticism, a low assessment of one's own abilities, and self-doubt all contribute to a negative self-perception. Feelings of inadequacy, incompetence, and doubt are experienced by someone who has a negative self-concept. These negative self-perceptions influence a person's behavior and the way others view him, which feeds into that negative self-perception.

ATTACHMENT STYLE:

The term "attachment" refers to the strong and long-lasting emotional connection or affectionate link we have with important individuals in our life. refers to a person's distinctive methods of communication in close caregiving and receiving relationships with "attachment figures," which frequently include their parents, kids, and romantic partners.In order to use the attachment figure as a safe haven from which one can seek support, protection, and comfort in times of difficulty, as well as a solid foundation from which one can freely explore the world when not in crisis, one must have faith in its availability.

Attachment Theory:

According to Bowlby (1969), early interactions with caregivers shape internal working models—mental representations of self and others—that influence behavior, emotion regulation, and self-concept throughout life.

Although it begins in early childhood, usually with the primary caregiver, attachment lasts the entirety of a person's life. Thus, the kind of connection that develops influences the person's relationships with everyone they come into contact with during their lifetime. Any behavior that leads to one person being near another or staying close to them is considered attachment behavior (Bowlby, 1982). This is particularly evident when the person is seeking stability or comfort due to fear, exhaustion, or illness. Security can grow in the recipient when they know their caretaker is kind and responsive, and a bond is formed between the two people involved. The person who needs comfort and care but isn't getting it becomes insecure when they realize their caregiver is unresponsive and may be neglectful.

To expand attachment research into adolescence and adulthood, researchers from many psychological specialties (developmental, clinical, personality, and social psychology) created new attachment style assessments in the 1980s. Applying Bowlby's theories to the study of romantic relationships, Hazan and Shaver (1987; Shaver et al., 1988) took a different route into the field of adult attachment.

Adult attachment refers to the affective bond that is established between adults in the context of intimate relationships. It is an automatic response based on cognitive emotional schemas that develop by virtue of attachment experiences with significant figures throughout life (Feeney and Noller, 1996; Feeney, 2002).Ainsworth et al. (1978) categorized these attachment patterns into secure, anxious, and avoidant styles.

- **Secure attachment style:** A stable connection style suggests that a person feels free to express their feelings honestly. As a result, adults who have a stable attachment style are able to rely on their partners and allow them to rely on them. Honesty, tolerance, and emotional intimacy are the cornerstones of relationships with someone who has a stable attachment style. This type of person doesn't dread being alone, even though they frequently flourish in relationships. Secure attachers are able to recognize and control their emotions, and they may even assist a partner in doing the same. They also tend to have a positive view of both themselves and others, so they do not excessively need validation or approval from others.
- **Avoidant attachment style:** Individuals with an avoidant/dismissive attachment style typically have a favourable opinion of themselves and a poor opinion of other people. As such, they favour encouraging a strong sense of autonomy and self-sufficiency, particularly in terms of emotions.

  Intimacy and emotional closeness are often avoided by adults with this attachment type; therefore, they may leave a relationship if they believe the other person is becoming dependent on them in this way. Because they don't want to rely on others, have others rely on them, or look to social relationships for support and acceptance,

people with the avoidant attachment type typically feel that they don't need to be in a relationship in order to feel complete. When confronted with a potentially emotionally charged circumstance, like conflict, they also have a tendency to conceal or repress their emotions.

- **Anxious attachment style:** Adults with an anxious attachment style typically have a positive opinion of other people but a negative opinion of themselves. This implies that they might consider their partner to be their actual "better half." The idea of living without their partner—or being alone in general—causes considerable amounts of anxiety because someone with this attachment type believes they are less deserving of love than other people. Stated differently, they have a profound fear of being abandoned. People with the anxious attachment style have a great need for security in relationships to allay this fear of abandonment, and their partner's care, attention, and response are often the "remedy" for their anxiety. Adults that have this attachment style look to their attachment figure for high degrees of closeness, acceptance, and responsiveness. They may become unduly reliant on the attachment figure because they value intimacy so highly.

The relationships between attachment styles and imposter feelings manifest distinctly across various life domains, particularly in intimate relationships and academic settings. Research indicates that individuals with insecure attachment styles, such as fearful or preoccupied, are more likely to experience imposter feelings, perceiving themselves as unworthy or unstable in their relationships (Alvarado, 2015). In academic contexts, students often attribute their successes to external factors, leading to feelings of fraudulence and self-doubt, which are exacerbated by high expectations and novel challenges (Ménard et al., 2023).

PARENTAL BONDING:

Parenting style is one of the most essential and crucial components of parent-child interaction and is influential to children’s emotional and behavioural development. How a child is raised by their parents can have a major impact on their mental health throughout their life. The role of parents is very important in shaping a child's development, as they provide support, guidance, and boundaries.

Parental bonding refers to the emotional quality of the relationship between a child and their caregivers, and it is a well-documented determinant of emotional health throughout the lifespan (Parker, 1983). Positive parental bonding, marked by warmth and support, fosters feelings of security, self-worth, and resilience. In contrast, negative parental bonding, such as neglect or overprotection, may contribute to the development of insecurity, emotional regulation difficulties, and the tendency to internalize feelings of inadequacy (Bowlby, 1988). These early experiences with caregivers shape the attachment style an individual develops, which in turn influences how they relate to others in adulthood.

Parental bonding is traditionally characterized by two dimensions: care and overprotection (Parker, 1979). These dimensions play a critical role in shaping a child’s self-concept, emotional regulation, and the ability to internalize positive feedback.Specifically, it appears

that having early interactions that were marked by high overprotection and low caring is more likely to be linked to higher anxiety levels in later life (Bennet & Stirling, 1998; Carter et al., 2001). The degree of control and interference in the relationship is the source of the overprotective dimension, whereas the emotional warmth and intimacy in the connection are the source of the caring dimension.Overprotectiveness is one parenting style that might impair teenagers' capacity to deal with difficulties, make decisions on their own, and grow in social skills (Priyana, 2023).

CHAPTER II : REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This literature review explores recent empirical studies that examine Imposter Phenomenon across populations such as students, faculty, and professionals in high-stakes environments.

Chakravarty (2022) examined how faculty members in STEM disciplines experience impostor phenomenon. The study identified several contributing factors, including comparisons with peers, evaluations by other faculty, public acknowledgment, anxiety over potential knowledge gaps, and a general sense of incompetence. These elements suggest that both internal insecurities and external academic pressures contribute to impostor feelings.

Lavelle et al. (2022) explored impostor phenomenon among professional evaluators, identifying three primary themes: the tendency to minimize achievements ("Discount"), attributing success to external forces like luck, and feeling fraudulent ("Fake"). The study also highlighted gender-specific coping strategies and proposed approaches to reduce the negative impact of these experiences.

Wydra et al. (2021) focused on medical students and found strong correlations between maladaptive perfectionism, impostor feelings, and suicidal ideation. Notably, the impostor phenomenon acted as a mediator between perfectionist tendencies and thoughts of self-harm, indicating its serious implications for mental health.

Bravata et al. (2020) conducted a systematic review on the imposter phenomenon (IP), revealing its prevalence across diverse populations, including students and professionals. The review highlighted key predictors such as low self-esteem, perfectionism, and anxiety, suggesting the need to investigate relational and emotional variables such as attachment and family background.

Anna et al. (2020) extended this understanding to a broader population, examining 831 doctoral students across disciplines. Using validated scales to assess impostor syndrome, depression, stress, and illness symptoms, the study found that impostor feelings were strong predictors of all three mental health outcomes. Specifically, impostorism accounted for 36% of the variance in stress and 30% in depression, indicating its substantial impact on overall well-being. These results underscore the pervasive and detrimental role of impostorism in graduate-level education.

Recent research also emphasizes the influence of gender identity traits and self-esteem in shaping impostor feelings. Flora et al. (2020) found that positive masculinity traits may protect against impostorism, while negative femininity traits increase vulnerability. The study also highlighted the potential role of social comparison in intensifying impostor-related distress.

Meanwhile, Prarthana (2020) confirmed a strong inverse relationship between self-esteem and impostorism among business students, reinforcing the idea that internalized self-worth is

a crucial buffer against impostor feelings. These findings are consistent with earlier work (e.g., Schubert et al., 2013) linking impostorism to unstable and contingent self-esteem.

Katherine et al. (2019) investigated the relationship between maladaptive perfectionism, impostor phenomenon, and emotional distress in a sample of 169 pre-clinical medical students. The study found that individuals who exhibited high levels of shame and embarrassment, and who met criteria for maladaptive perfectionism, also reported elevated impostor feelings. These students showed moderate levels of anxiety and depressive symptoms, highlighting a clear link between perfectionistic tendencies, impostorism, and negative emotional states. The findings suggest that this combination significantly compromises the mental health of medical students in the early stages of their training.

Jennifer et al. (2016) investigated the relationship between impostor feelings and burnout levels among medical students. Out of 2,612 students invited, 138 completed the study, which utilized the Young Impostor Scale (YIS) and the Maslach Burnout Inventory–Human Services Survey to assess impostor tendencies and burnout, respectively. The findings indicated a significant association between impostor feelings and various dimensions of burnout, including emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, psychological distress, and reduced personal accomplishment. This suggests that students who experience impostorism are more likely to suffer from key indicators of burnout.

Peteet, Montgomery, & Weekes (2015) examined the imposter phenomenon in high-achieving minority students and found that family dynamics, especially parental expectations and cultural identity conflict, contributed to feelings of being an "imposter" despite success.

Schubert et al. (2013) investigated the relationship between the impostor phenomenon and self-esteem dynamics. The study found that impostorism was linked to fragile self-esteem, characterized by instability, discrepant self-perceptions, and conditional self-worth. Additionally, impostors were found to experience conflicted motivational patterns, showing simultaneous drives to succeed and fear of failure. They demonstrated heightened sensitivity to both rewards and punishments, reflected in elevated Behavioral Activation System (BAS) and Behavioral Inhibition System (BIS) responses. This indicates that impostor feelings are more strongly influenced by the fear of failure than the pursuit of success.

Austin et al. (2009) examined the mediating role of impostor feelings in the relationship between survivor guilt and depressive symptoms among 97 African American college students. The results revealed that impostor feelings were significantly associated with survivor guilt and acted as a mediator, weakening the direct link between survivor guilt and depressive symptomatology. This suggests that individuals experiencing survivor guilt may internalize their distress through impostor feelings, which in turn contributes to depressive outcomes.

Mehrabizadeh et al. (2005) explored psychological predictors of the impostor phenomenon among male and female graduate students. The study identified a positive correlation

between fear of negative evaluation and impostor feelings, and a negative correlation between self-esteem and the impostor phenomenon. Additionally, significant correlations were found between impostor syndrome and several psychological variables, including fear of success, self-esteem, perfectionism, and fear of negative evaluation. Among these, perfectionism and fear of success emerged as the strongest predictors of impostor syndrome across both genders.

Kumar & Jagacinski (2006) connected IP to achievement goal orientation, showing that individuals high in performance-avoidance goals (fear of failing) were more likely to exhibit imposter feelings—especially those with perfectionist traits linked to rigid parental standards.

Henning et al. (1998) investigated the relationship between impostor phenomenon, perfectionism, and psychological adjustment among 477 students in medical, dental, and pharmacy programs. The study revealed a strong correlation between perfectionist tendencies, current psychological distress, and impostor feelings. These findings suggest that students in health-related fields who exhibit high levels of perfectionism are more likely to experience emotional challenges and feelings of inadequacy associated with impostorism.

IMPOSTER PHENOMENON AND CONFLICT:

Conflict—whether within families, intimate relationships, or the self—can have long-term effects on psychological well-being. Family conflict, especially during adolescence, has been linked to the development of insecure attachment, low self-esteem, and poor emotion regulation (Laursen & Collins, 2009). Interpersonal conflict with peers or romantic partners can reinforce feelings of inadequacy and social comparison, both of which are predictors of IP (Cokley et al., 2017). In particular, self-concept conflict—the internal dissonance between actual and ideal selves—can heighten imposter feelings.

Parkman (2016) emphasized that the imposter phenomenon is rooted in an individual's internalized fears of failure and fear of being exposed. Individuals who experience the imposter phenomenon often feel an intense need to overcompensate for their perceived lack of ability, leading to a cycle of self-doubt and perfectionism, which is a key feature of intrapersonal conflict.

Cokley et al. (2017) explored the intersection of ethnic minority status, academic stress, and imposter feelings. They found that intrapersonal conflict (identity confusion, low self-concept) played a significant role in the development of imposter feelings, particularly when combined with external pressures and conflict in interpersonal domains.

Hutchins & Rainbolt (2017) identified early emotional conflict and lack of parental validation as key triggers for IP in academic professionals. Participants described growing up in high-pressure environments where self-worth was contingent on achievement.

Harvey, Billings, and Nilan (1985) found that those who experience the imposter phenomenon tend to avoid new opportunities or challenges because of their fear of being exposed as "frauds." This avoidance behavior reflects an internal conflict between the desire

for success and the fear of failure or exposure, which is characteristic of intrapersonal conflict.

IMPOSTER PHENOMENON AND ATTACHMENT STYLE:

Research indicates that individuals with insecure attachment styles, particularly anxious and avoidant, are more prone to experiencing IP.

Koester, Stillerman, & Wiens (2022) conducted a longitudinal study showing that secure attachment in young adults acted as a buffer against developing IP, especially during periods of academic or career-related stress. This underscores the protective nature of early secure bonding and consistent emotional support.

Choi, Lee, & Lee (2020) examined the mediating role of adult attachment between parenting style and IP. Their results indicated that insecure attachment styles (anxious and avoidant) mediated the impact of authoritarian parenting on imposter feelings. This supports the idea that early relational patterns shape later self-perceptions and competence anxiety.

Neureiter & Traut-Mattausch (2016) found that individuals with insecure attachment and poor parental relationships were more likely to struggle with imposter feelings in early career stages. The study also emphasized the long-term influence of internalized self-doubt from early relational patterns.

Mónaco, In her 2022 study, investigated how emotional abilities mediate the relationship between attachment styles and relationship satisfaction in young adults. The study included 265 Spanish participants (59.2% female, aged 18–36), all of whom were engaged in romantic relationships. Mónaco found that individuals with a dismissive avoidant attachment style reported lower levels of relationship satisfaction. Additionally, those with a fearful attachment style exhibited lower emotional intelligence, which was associated with reduced relationship satisfaction. The study concluded that insecure attachment patterns, including avoidance and anxiety, negatively impacted relationship satisfaction.

Kumar and Mattanah (2016) explored the impact of parentally taught attachment styles on the romantic relationships and overall well-being of young adults and found that emotional adjustment in young adulthood was positively associated with secure attachment to both parents, Interestingly, secure attachment to mothers was found to have a stronger influence on well-being than attachment to fathers. Overall, the study concluded that young adults with stable attachments to their parents—particularly mothers—are better prepared for successful romantic relationships and overall emotional adjustment, and that cultivating romantic competence can enhance well-being regardless of attachment style.

Gibson et al. (2008) examined the role of attachment styles and entitlement in predicting the impostor phenomenon among female graduate students. The study revealed that individuals with high levels of self-reliance and entitlement related to self-assurance were more likely to attribute positive feedback to stable internal qualities, which helped mitigate feelings of being an impostor. Conversely, those with narcissistic expectations and anxious attachment styles

struggled to accept positive feedback, as they perceived flaws in their self-worth, which exacerbated impostor feelings. The findings suggest that both attachment styles and entitlement significantly influence how individuals process positive reinforcement, and they play a crucial role in the development of impostorism.

Bernard et al. (2017) investigated the relationship between anxious attachment and impostor feelings in young adults. The study found that individuals with an anxious attachment style often rely heavily on external approval and harbor a deep fear of rejection. This attachment pattern was identified as a significant predictor of impostor feelings, with these individuals tending to underestimate their abilities and attribute their successes to external factors, rather than personal merit. The findings suggest that anxious attachment not only affects relationship dynamics but also influences self-perception and overall emotional well-being, reinforcing the idea that insecure attachment patterns contribute to feelings of being an impostor.

IMPOSTER PHENOMENON AND PARENTAL BONDING

Research has also examined the role of parenting in the development of impostor feelings.

Yaffe (2021) investigated the role of parental care and social anxiety in the expression of impostor feelings. The study found that a lack of perceived parental care was indirectly associated with increased impostor feelings through heightened social anxiety, affecting both mothers and fathers' perceived care levels.

Yosi (2021) explored the relationship between social anxiety, parental bonding, and the impostor phenomenon in a sample of 247 Israeli students. The study used the Clance Impostor Phenomenon Scale, Social Phobia Inventory, and a parental bonding instrument to assess the students' perceptions of parental care and their levels of social anxiety and impostor feelings. The findings revealed a positive correlation between social anxiety and impostor feelings, indicating that students who perceived their parents as less caring experienced higher levels of social anxiety, which in turn was associated with increased impostor scores. This suggests that parenting style plays a mediating role in the development of impostor feelings, with less caring parental behavior contributing to both social anxiety and impostorism in students.

Li, Zhang, & Wang (2020) studied Chinese college students and found that low parental care and high parental control significantly predicted perfectionism and imposter feelings. These findings reinforce the role of parental bonding as a foundation for self-worth and identity during emerging adulthood.

Sánchez, García, & Padilla (2019) linked parental bonding styles (measured by the Parental Bonding Instrument) with IP and perfectionism. Their study confirmed that low care and high overprotection contribute to negative self-evaluation and maladaptive striving—key traits of the imposter experience.

A study by Hutchins and Rainbolt (2017) found that participants who reported low parental support and high emotional conflict in early life were more likely to exhibit both insecure attachment and imposter tendencies in adulthood.

Peteet, Montgomery, & Weekes (2015) examined the imposter phenomenon in high-achieving minority students and found that family dynamics, especially parental expectations and cultural identity conflict, contributed to feelings of being an "imposter" despite success.

McClain, Enciso, and Martinez (2013) found that individuals raised by authoritarian or overprotective parents were more likely to experience impostor feelings. Specifically, authoritative parenting and overcontrol parenting styles were linked to fear of failure, perfectionism, and self-doubt, which contributed to impostorism in adulthood.

Empirical research (e.g., Gibson-Beverly & Schwartz, 2008) shows that individuals from conflict-heavy family environments report higher levels of psychological distress and lower self-efficacy—conditions conducive to the development of IP.

Want and Kleitman (2006) replicated the findings of Sonnak and Towell (2001), exploring the role of both maternal and paternal rearing styles in the development of impostor feelings. Their study found that father's rearing style—specifically care and overprotection—was a significant predictor of impostor feelings, while mother's rearing style had an indirect effect through its relationship with the father's parenting style.

Want and Kleitman (2006) further suggested that this perception of insufficient care might be more specific to perceived paternal care, although their findings indicated that the correlation between paternal care and impostorism was slightly weaker than the one found by Sonnak and Towell. Additionally, a weak positive relationship was observed between Impostorism and perceived parental control/overprotection, with the correlation being stronger in cases where the overprotection was attributed to father figures.

Sonnak and Towell (2001) found that parental overcontrol and lack of care during upbringing were significantly correlated with heightened impostor feelings. The study also indicated that greater paternal care was linked to reduced impostor tendencies.

Bussotti (1990) explored the relationship between family environment and impostorism, finding that impostor feelings were negatively correlated with family cohesion and expressiveness, suggesting that strong family bonds and open communication may reduce the likelihood of experiencing impostorism. On the other hand, family conflict and family control were positively correlated with impostor feelings, although these correlations were not strong, implying that other factors also contribute to the phenomenon.

CHAPTER III: METHODS

AIMS OF THE STUDY: The aim of the present study was to investigate the effect of conflict, parental bonding, attachment style on imposter phenomenon among young adults.

OBJECTIVES: The primary objective of this study is to determine the effect of conflict(with respect to Family,Sex,interpersonal relationship and self-concept), adult attachment style and parental bonding on imposter phenomenon in young adults.

Specifically,

1. To examine the relationship between conflict (with respect to Family,Sex,interpersonal relationship and self-concept) and Impostor Phenomenon among young adults.
2. To examine the relationship between attachment style (Avoidant, secure and anxious attachment style) and Impostor Phenomenon among young adults.
3. To examine the relationship between parental bonding (care and overprotection for mother and father) and Impostor Phenomenon among young adults.
4. To examine gender differences across conflict, attachment styles, parental bonding, and the Impostor Phenomenon among young adults, and to identify which specific variables, if any, show significant variation between males and females.

HYPOTHESES:

$H_0$1.1: There is no significant relationship between conflict with respect to family and imposter phenomenon

H_a1.1: There is significant relationship between conflict with respect to family and imposter phenomenon

$H_0$1.2: There is no significant relationship between conflict with respect to sex and imposter phenomenon

H_a1.2: There is significant relationship between conflict with respect to sex and imposter phenomenon

$H_0$1.3: There is no significant relationship between conflict with respect to interpersonal relationship and imposter phenomenon

H_a1.3: There is significant relationship between conflict with respect to interpersonal relationship and imposter phenomenon

$H_0$1.4: There is no significant relationship between conflict with respect to self-concept and imposter phenomenon

H_a1.4: There is significant relationship between conflict with respect to self-concept and imposter phenomenon

$H_0$2.1: There is no significant relationship between avoidant attachment style and imposter phenomenon

H_a2.1: There is significant relationship between avoidant attachment style and imposter phenomenon

$H_0$2.2: There is no significant relationship between secure attachment style and imposter phenomenon

H_a2.2: There is significant relationship between secure attachment style and imposter phenomenon

$H_0$2.3: There is no significant relationship between anxious attachment style and imposter phenomenon

H_a2.3: There is significant relationship between anxious attachment style and imposter phenomenon

$H_0$3.1: There is no significant relationship between care[mother] and imposter phenomenon

H_a3.1: There is significant relationship between care[mother] and imposter phenomenon

$H_0$3.2: There is no significant relationship between overprotection[mother] and imposter phenomenon

H_a3.2: There is significant relationship between overprotection[mother] and imposter phenomenon

$H_0$3.3: There is no significant relationship between care[father] and imposter phenomenon

H_a3.3: There is significant relationship between care[father] and imposter phenomenon

$H_0$3.4: There is no significant relationship between overprotection[father] and imposter phenomenon

H_a3.4: There is significant relationship between overprotection[father] and imposter phenomenon

$H_0$4.1: There is no significant gender difference in conflict with respect to family among young adults.

H_a4.1: There is a significant gender difference in conflict with respect to family among young adults.

$H_0$4.2: There is no significant gender difference in conflict with respect to sex among young adults.

H_a4.2: There is a significant gender difference in conflict with respect to sex among young adults.
$H_0$4.3: There is no significant gender difference in conflict with respect to interpersonal relationships among young adults.

H_a4.3: There is a significant gender difference in conflict with respect to interpersonal relationships among young adults.

$H_0$4.4: There is no significant gender difference in conflict with respect to self-concept among young adults.

H_a4.4: There is a significant gender difference in conflict with respect to self-concept among young adults.

$H_0$4.5: There is no significant gender difference in the Impostor Phenomenon among young adults.

H_a4.5: There is a significant gender difference in the Impostor Phenomenon among young adults.

$H_0$4.6: There is no significant gender difference in avoidant attachment style among young adults.

H_a4.6: There is a significant gender difference in avoidant attachment style among young adults.

$H_0$4.7: There is no significant gender difference in secure attachment style among young adults.

H_a4.7: There is a significant gender difference in secure attachment style among young adults.

$H_0$4.8: There is no significant gender difference in anxious attachment style among young adults.

H_a4.8: There is a significant gender difference in anxious attachment style among young adults.

$H_0$4.9: There is no significant gender difference in care[mother] among young adults.

H_a4.9: There is a significant gender difference in care[mother] among young adults.

$H_0$4.10: There is no significant gender difference in overprotection[mother] among young adults.

H_a4.10: There is a significant gender difference in maternal overprotection among young adults.

$H_0$4.11: There is no significant gender difference in care[father] among young adults.

H_a4.11: There is a significant gender difference in care[father] among young adults.

$H_0$4.12: There is no significant gender difference in overprotection[father] among young adults.

H_a4.12: There is a significant gender difference in overprotection [father] among young adults.

VARIABLES:

- **Imposter phenomenon:** The imposter phenomenon refers to feelings of inadequacy and self-doubt, where an individual perceives themselves as a fraud despite evidence of success or competence (Clance, 1985)
- **Conflict:** Conflict is defined as the expression of internal psychological tension, emotional distress, or contradictory thoughts and attitudes across various life domains, including family, sex, interpersonal relationships, self-concept, and future aspirations (Sacks, 1950). Conflict is identified through the presence of recurring themes of ambivalence, guilt, indecision, emotional suppression, or contradictory statements within the participant's responses.
- **Attachment style:** Attachment style refers to the patterns of emotional regulation, trust, and intimacy that individuals develop based on their early experiences with caregivers
- **Parental bonding:** Parental bonding refers to individuals' perceptions of the level of care and Overprotection provided by their parents during childhood. care (affection and emotional support) and overprotection (excessive control and interference).

TOOLS USED:

INFORMATION SCHEDULE: Prior to participation, individuals were informed about the nature, purpose, and confidentiality of the study. Verbal consent was first obtained to ensure willingness to participate. Participants who agreed were then provided with a written informed consent form outlining their rights, including voluntary participation and the ability to withdraw at any point without penalty. Only those who provided written consent proceeded with the study.Participants were then asked to complete a Social Demographic designed to collect basic background data relevant to the research. This schedule included items related to age, gender, residence type, family structure, education level, socio-economic status, and the presence or history of diagnosed physical or psychiatric illnesses (self or within the family). All data were kept confidential and used solely for research purposes.

- **CLANCE IMPOSTER PHENOMENON SCALE, (Clance, P. R., 1985):**

The Clance Impostor Phenomenon Scale (CIPS), developed by Pauline Rose Clance in 1985, measures the degree to which individuals experience feelings of inadequacy and self-doubt despite evidence of competence or success. The scale includes 20 items assessing feelings of being a fraud, internalized fears of being exposed, and attributing success to external factors.

Responses are recorded on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (not at all true) to 5 (very true).The CIPS was specifically designed to identify the internal experiences of individuals who, despite evident success, struggle with persistent self-doubt and a sense of intellectual fraudulence.Some examples of questions are: “I can give the impression that I’m more competent than I really am” and “I sometimes think I obtained my present position or gained my present success because I happened to be in the right place at the right time or knew the right people.” It is worded to help avoid social desirability effects and was originally created to measure the experience of phoniness in high achievers. The psychometric properties of the scale indicate that it has demonstrated high internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from .85 to .95 (Clance, 1985).The test-retest reliability over a two-week period was reported to be .89 (Clance, 1985). Construct validity has been supported through factor analysis, which reveals that the scale reliably measures the imposter phenomenon as distinct from other psychological constructs like self-esteem or anxiety (Clance, 1985).Convergent validity is evidenced by significant positive correlations with measures of perfectionism and self-doubt, as well as negative correlations with self-esteem (Clance & Imes, 1978).

- **SACK’S SENTENCE COMPLETION TEST (SSCT):**

The Sacks Sentence Completion Test (SSCT) is a projective psychological tool used to assess an individual’s emotional conflicts, including those related to family, interpersonal relationships, sexual/intimate relationships, and self-concept. Participants complete sentence stems such as "My family always..." or "I feel uncomfortable when..." to express unresolved emotional conflicts. The responses are analyzed for recurring themes of conflict or emotional distress. It is a 60-item test that asks respondents to complete 60 incomplete questions with the first thing that comes to mind. The SSCT is commonly used to assess patterns related to Family, Sex, interpersonal relationships, and Self-concept. The sentences are designed to elicit a wide range of responses, from personal attitudes to emotional states.

The internal consistency and inter-rater reliability for the SSCT have been reported to be adequate, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from .70 to .85 depending on the subscale or response domain being assessed (Sacks, 1974).Test-retest reliability is also moderately high, with correlations ranging from .70 to .80 in follow-up administrations (Sacks, 1974).Construct validity is supported by studies that have shown the SSCT effectively measures various dimensions of emotional conflict (family, interpersonal, sexual/intimate, self-concept) (Sacks, 1974).Criterion-related validity is demonstrated through correlations with clinical assessments of psychological distress and interpersonal difficulties (Sacks, 1974).

- **ADULT ATTACHMENT SCALE, Collins and Read (1990):**

The Adult Attachment Scale (AAS) developed by Collins and Read (1990) assesses individuals' attachment styles in adulthood, categorizing respondents as secure, anxious, or avoidant based on their responses to relational scenarios. The scale includes items that assess intimacy, trust, and dependency in adult relationships. The scale has been widely used to assess adult attachment patterns in romantic and close relationships. It consists of 18 items.Each subscale includes 6 items, rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "not at all characteristic of me" to "very characteristic of me."

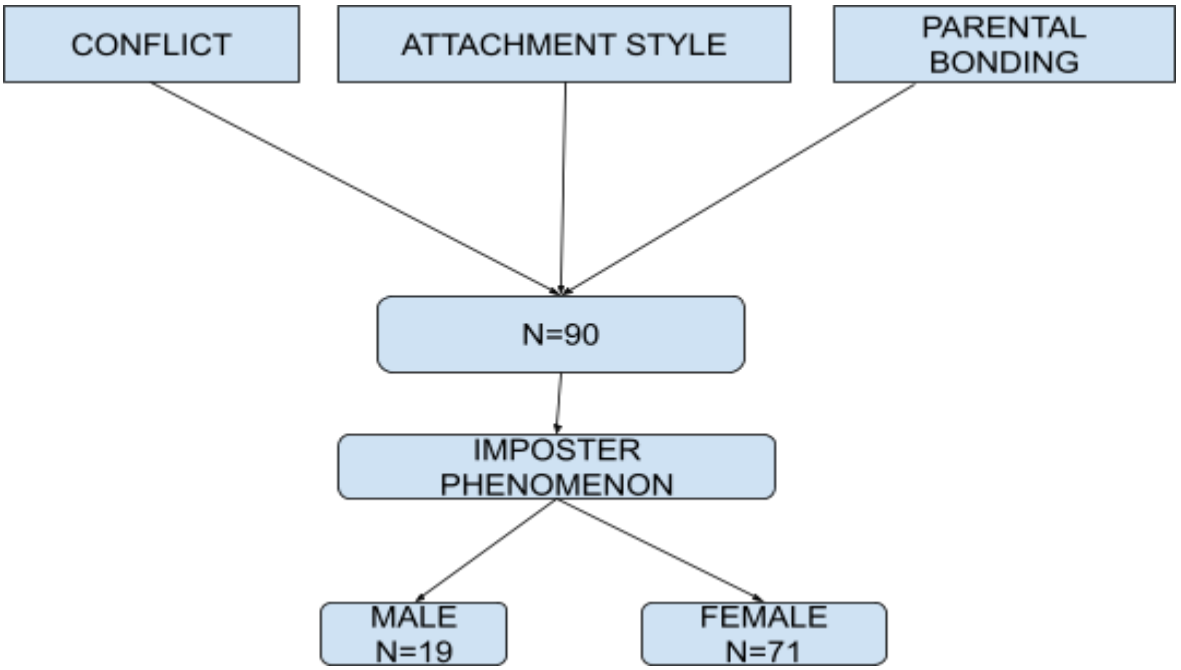
The internal consistency of the AASS was reported to be Cronbach's alpha = .87 for the overall scale (Collins & Read, 1990).Test-retest reliability over a period of six weeks was found to be .80, demonstrating the scale's stability (Collins & Read, 1990). The construct validity of the AASS has been supported through factor analysis, which confirms the three-factor model (secure, anxious, and avoidant attachment) as well as its association with interpersonal behaviors (Collins & Read, 1990).The predictive validity is demonstrated through the scale's ability to predict relational outcomes such as satisfaction, conflict, and emotional regulation in intimate relationships (Feeney & Noller, 1996).

- **PARENTAL BONDING INSTRUMENT (PBI), Parker et al. (1979):**

The Parental Bonding Instrument (PBI) developed by Parker et al. (1979) measures the perceived care and overprotection received from one's parents during childhood. It assesses the emotional climate of the parent-child relationship along two dimensions: care (nurturance, warmth, support) and overprotection (control, excessive restriction). The PBI consists of 25 items, which are divided into two major dimensions: Parental Care and Parental overprotection (Control). Each dimension is assessed separately for both the mother and father. Participants are asked to recall their perceptions of how their mother and father interacted with them during the first 16 years of life. These interactions are rated on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = Very Unlikely to 4 = Very Likely.

The instrument demonstrates strong psychometric properties. The internal consistency of the PBI is generally high, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients of .82 for the care subscale and .79 for the overprotection subscale (Parker et al., 1979).Test-retest reliability was reported as .80 over a 12-month period (Parker et al., 1979).The construct validity of the PBI has been established through factor analysis, which supports the two-dimensional structure of care and overprotection (Parker et al., 1979).The predictive validity of the PBI has been demonstrated through its correlation with various psychological outcomes such as depression, anxiety, and self-esteem (Parker et al., 1979).

DESIGN:



PROCEDURE:

Participants were selected using a purposive sampling method from various departments of Sister Nivedita University to ensure a diverse and representative sample. After initial contact, rapport was established to ensure participant comfort and cooperation. They were informed about the purpose and nature of the research, and informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to data collection. Participants were assured that their participation was voluntary, and they could withdraw at any time without any negative consequences. Once consent was granted, hard copies of the questionnaire—including demographic details and psychological scales—were distributed. Participants were asked to complete the questionnaire in a single sitting, which was expected to take approximately 30-45 minutes. All necessary instructions regarding how to complete the scales were clearly explained. Participants were encouraged to seek clarification immediately if they experienced any difficulty in understanding any of the items. Additionally, confidentiality was ensured, with all responses anonymized and stored securely to protect participants' privacy.

SAMPLE DESCRIPTION:

The sample for the following study consisted of young adults in the age range of 18-25 years. The participants were selected using purposive sampling. Total sample :N= 90; Including 19 males and 71 females.

INCLUSION CRITERIA:

- ➢ Participants were required to have a signed written contract confirming their informed consent
- ➢ Participants needed to be between 18 and 25 years of age
- ➢ Unmarried
- ➢ Both male and female studying in the university

EXCLUSION CRITERIA:

- ➢ Students with diagnosed psychiatric illnesses or those who were taking drugs that cause any psychiatric illness were excluded from the study
- ➢ Those who did not give consent were excluded from the study.
- ➢ Those who haven't completed the whole questionnaire were excluded from the study.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Descriptive and inferential statistics will be used to analyze the data using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences), version 20.

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

Table 1: Table showing mean and standard deviation of the variables

Variables	Mean	SD
Family	.4734	.26922
Sex	.4613	.25490
Interpersonal Relationship	.4118	.33284
Self-concept	.7734	.18798
Imposter phenomenon	62.57	14.711
Avoidant Attachment	2.83	.716
Secure Attachment	2.60	.636
Anxious Attachment	2.26	.868
Care[mother]	27.30	6.926
Overprotection[mother]	14.42	7.424
Care[father]	23.73	7.702
Overprotection[father]	15.50	6.819

Table 2.1: Table showing mean and standard deviation of variables of males

	Variables	Mean	SD
MALE [N=19]	Family	.4158	.19887
	Sex	.4521	.25709
	Interpersonal Relationship	.3895	.31869
	Self-concept	.7395	.18413
	Imposter phenomenon	59.42	11.305

	Avoidant Attachment	2.76	.595
	Secure Attachment	2.83	.401
	Anxious Attachment	2.24	.855
	Care[mother]	25.58	6.283
	Overprotection[mother]	16.11	7.179
	Care[father]	23.58	4.426
	Overprotection[father]	16.84	6.719

Table 2.2: Table showing mean and standard deviation of variables of females

	Variables	**Mean**	**SD**
FEMALE [N=71]	Family	.4889	.28433
	Sex	.4638	.25610
	Interpersonal Relationship	.4178	.33848
	Self-concept	.7825	.18924
	Imposter phenomenon	63.41	15.456
	Avoidant Attachment	2.85	.747
	Secure Attachment	2.54	.674
	Anxious Attachment	2.27	.878
	Care[mother]	27.76	7.058
	Overprotection[mother]	13.97	7.474
	Care[father]	23.77	8.389
	Overprotection[father]	15.14	6.848

Table 3: Table showing values of Skewness and Kurtosis of the variables

Variables	Skewness	Kurtosis
Family	.930 (.254)	.920 (.503)
Sex	.103 (.254)	-.597 (.503)
Interpersonal Relationship	3.595 (.254)	19.584 (.503)
Self-concept	-.032 (.254)	-.146 (.503)
Imposter phenomenon	-.051 (.254)	.121 (.503)
Avoidant Attachment	.034 (.254)	-.732 (.503)
Secure Attachment	.057 (.254)	-.295 (.503)
Anxious Attachment	.800 (.254)	-.093 (.503)
Care[mother]	-.741 (.254)	.116 (.503)
Overprotection[mother]	.388 (.254)	-.124 (.503)
Care[father]	-.452 (.254)	-.375 (.503)
Overprotection[father]	.602 (.254)	.123 (.503)

Table 4: Values of Test of Normality of the variables

Variables	Kolmogorov-Smirnov	Shapiro-Wilk
Family	.000	.000
Sex	.004	.021
Interpersonal Relationship	.000	.000
Self-concept	.104	.269
Imposter phenomenon	.200	.781
Avoidant Attachment	.042	.156
Secure Attachment	.003	.095

Anxious Attachment	.000	.000
Care[mother]	0.17	.000
Overprotection[mother]	.200	.192
Care[father]	.176	.026
Overprotection[father]	.200	.022

A series of Kolmogorov–Smirnov and Shapiro–Wilk tests were conducted to assess the normality of the study variables. The results indicated that most variables significantly deviated from a normal distribution, with the exception of Self-concept, Imposter Phenomenon, and Overprotection [Mother], which were approximately normally distributed. Only Self-concept and Overprotection [Mother] met assumptions for normality across both tests. While Imposter Phenomenon had a significant Shapiro–Wilk result, the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test was non-significant ($p > .05$), suggesting approximate normality, particularly with larger samples. All other variables demonstrated significant deviations from normality ($p < .05$), indicating the use of non-parametric analyses may be appropriate for those variables.

GRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION OF THE VARIABLES

Figure 1: Graph showing distribution of conflict with respect to Family.

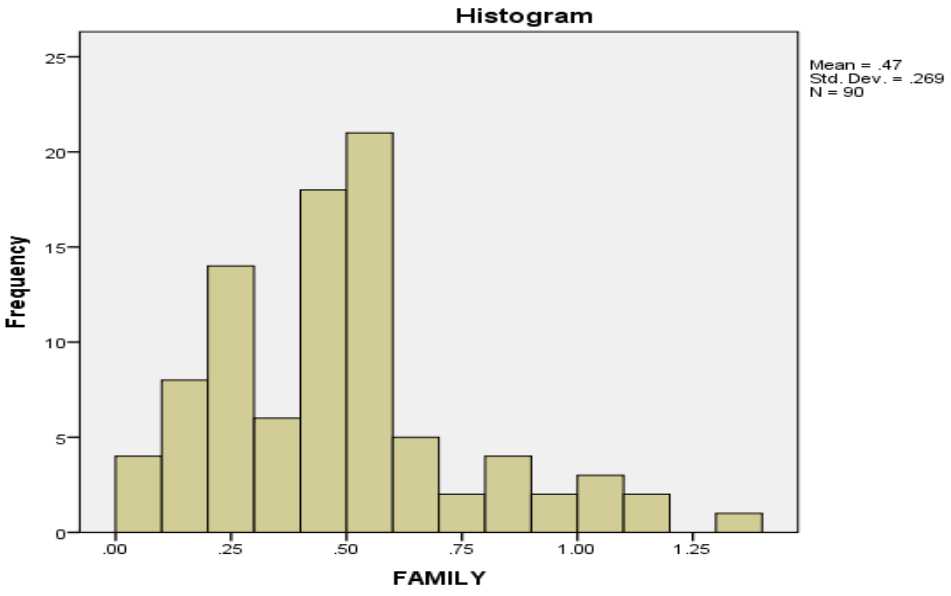


Figure 2: Graph showing distribution of conflict with respect to Sex.

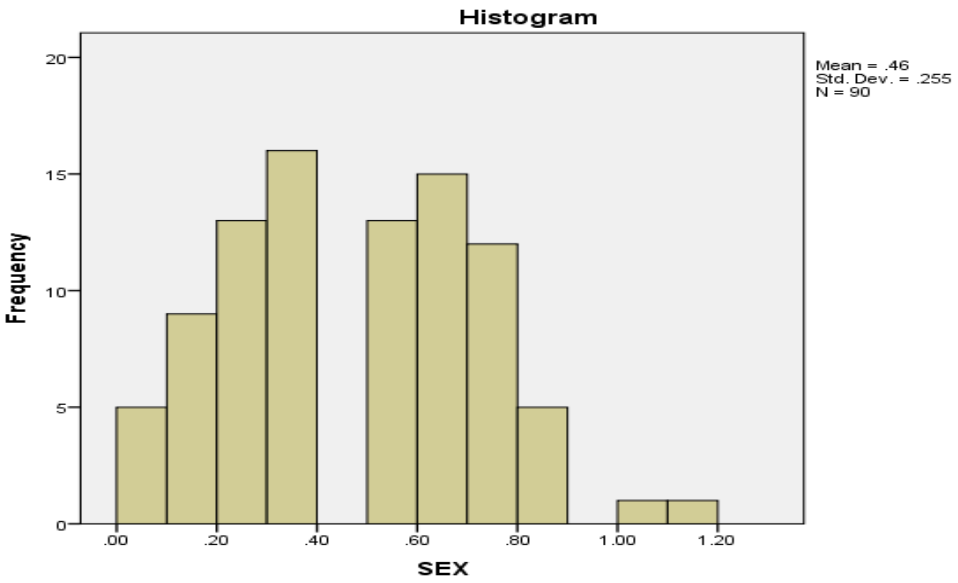


Figure 3: Graph showing distribution of conflict with respect to Interpersonal relationship.

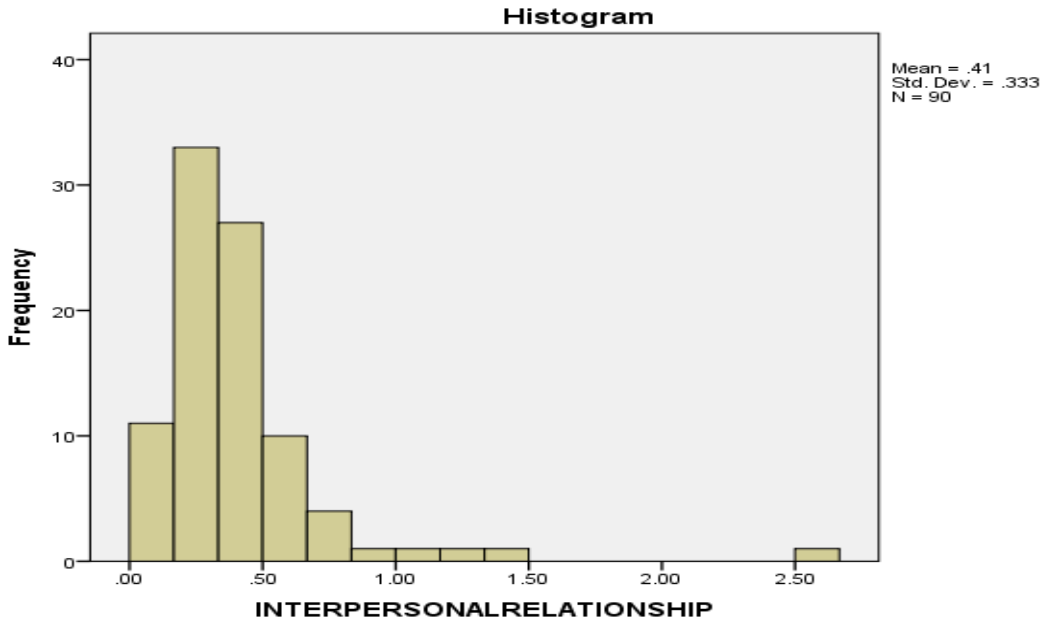


Figure 4: Graph showing distribution of conflict with respect to Self-concept.

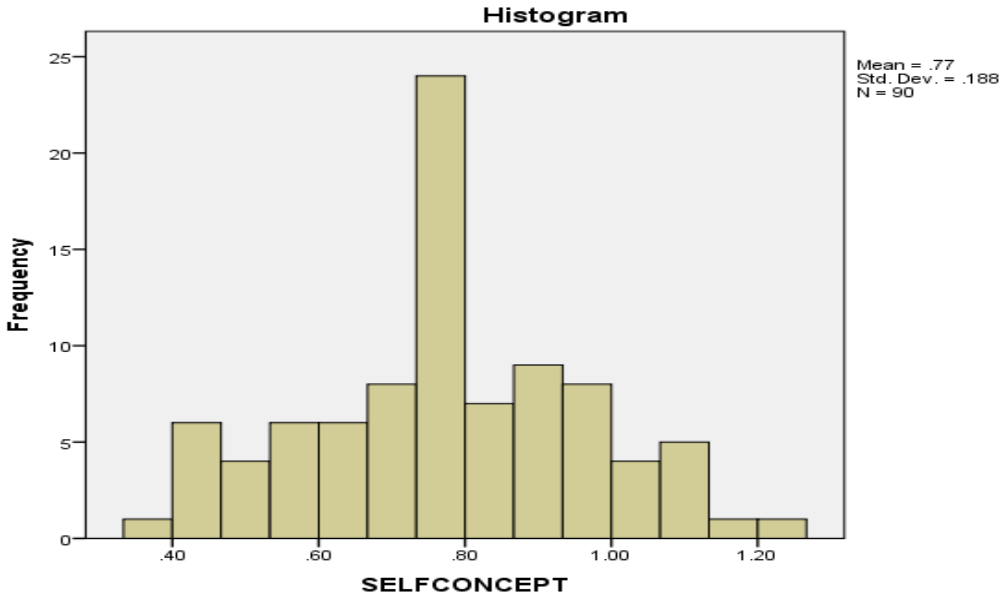


Figure 5: Graph showing distribution of Imposter Phenomenon.

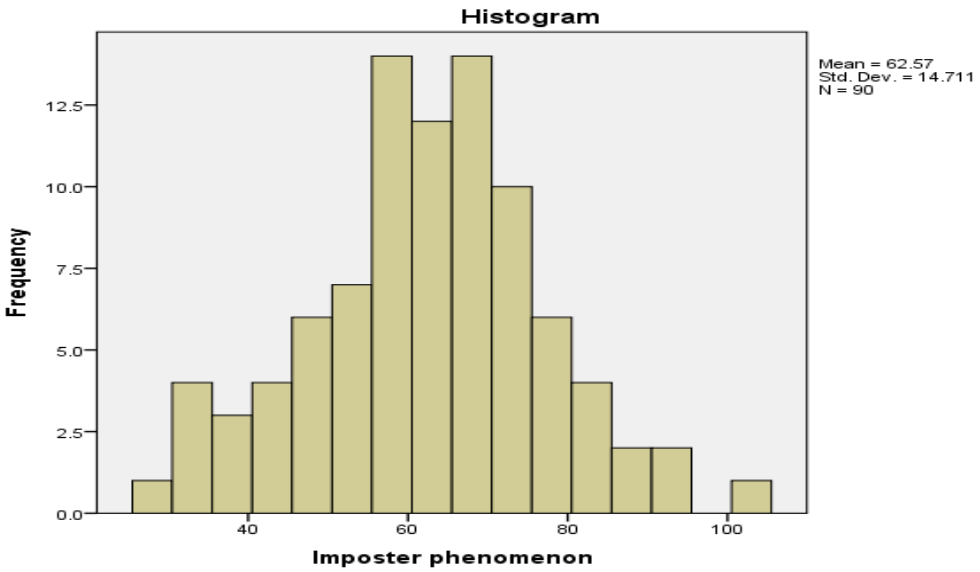


Figure 6:Graph showing distribution of Avoidant attachment style.

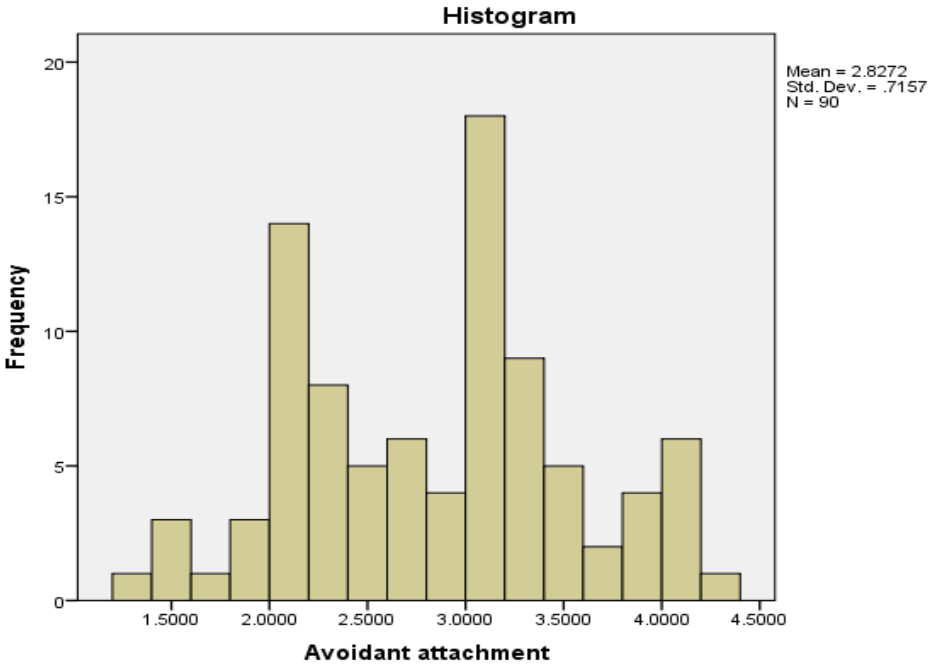


Figure 7: Graph showing distribution of Secure attachment style.

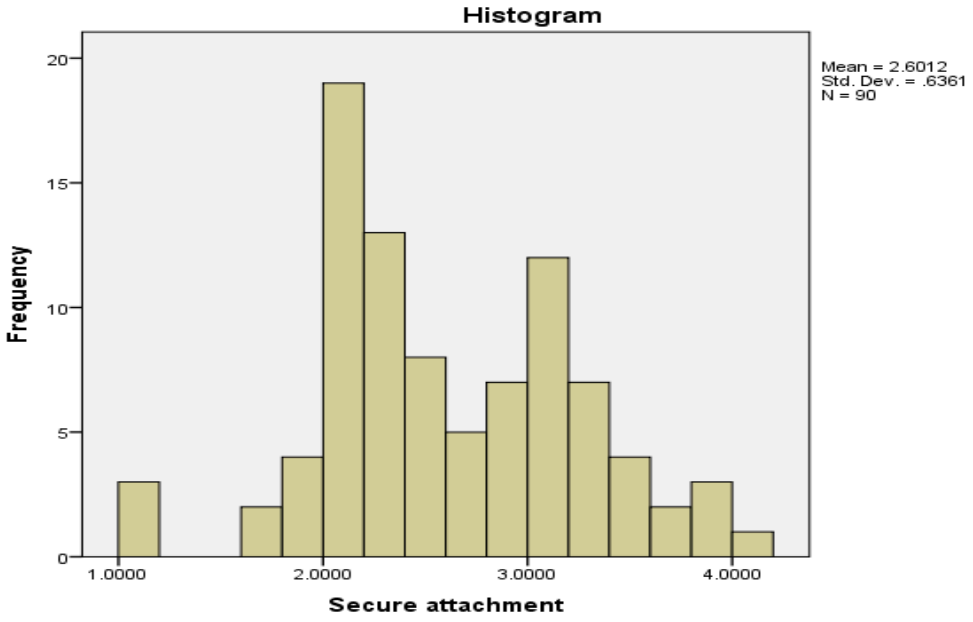


Figure 8: Graph showing distribution of Anxious attachment style.

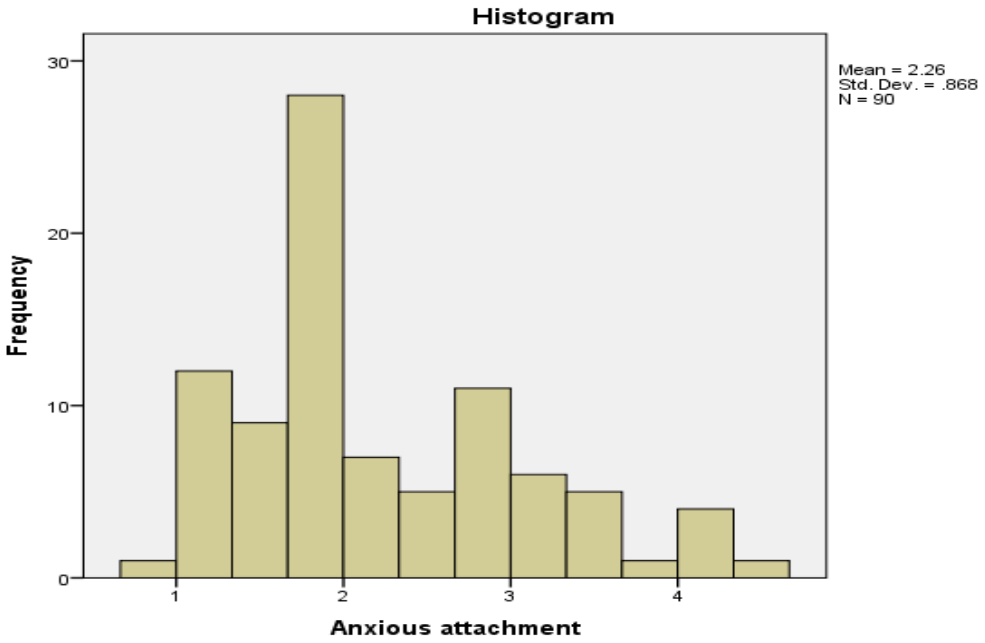


Figure 9: Graph showing distribution of parental bonding with respect to care[mother].

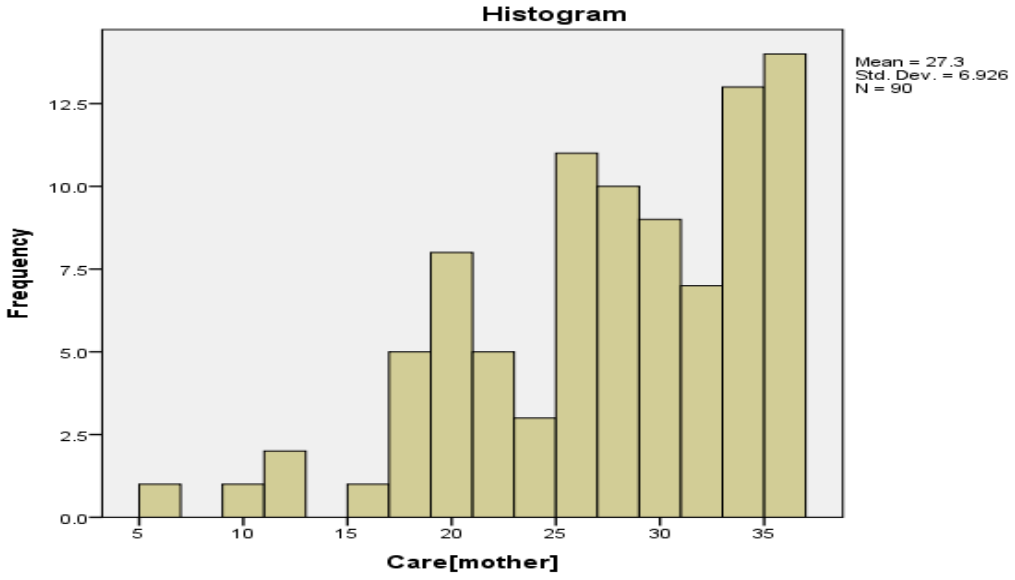


Figure 10: Graph showing distribution of parental bonding with respect to overprotection[mother].

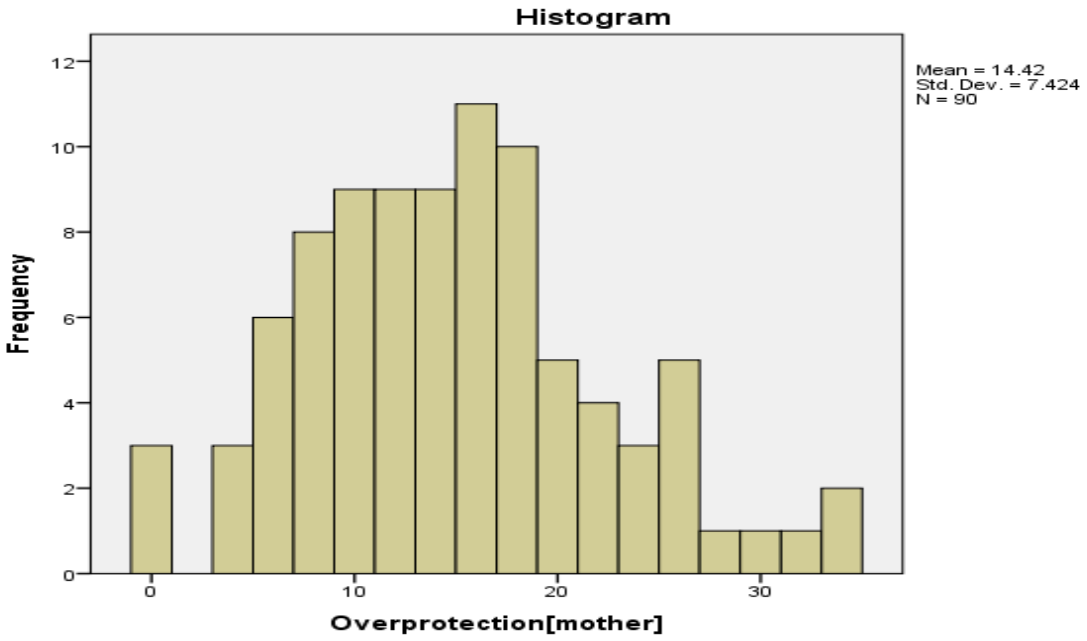


Figure 11: Graph showing distribution of parental bonding with respect to care[father].

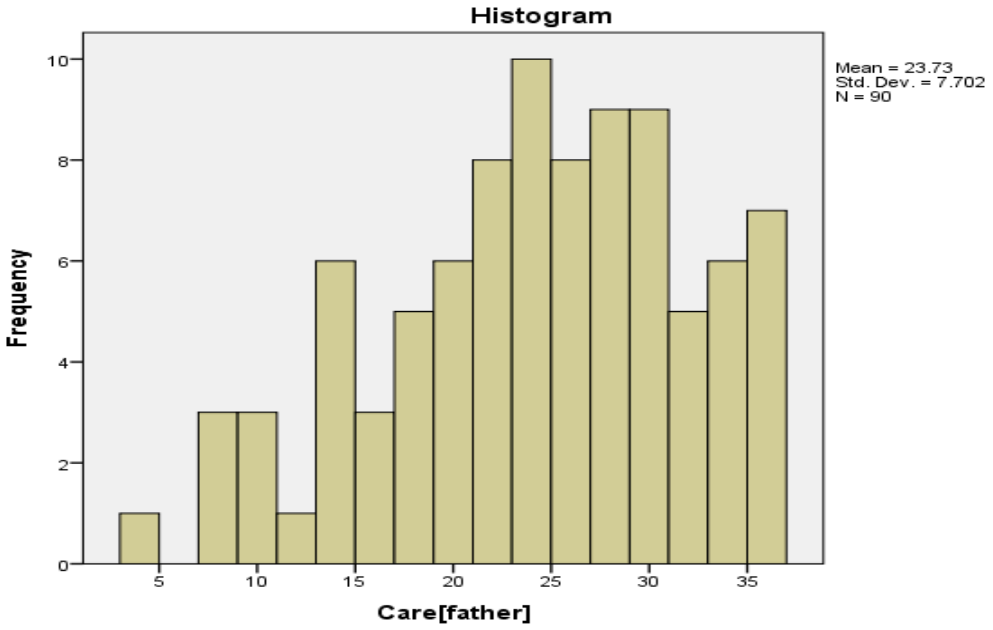


Figure 12: Graph showing distribution of parental bonding with respect to overprotection [father].

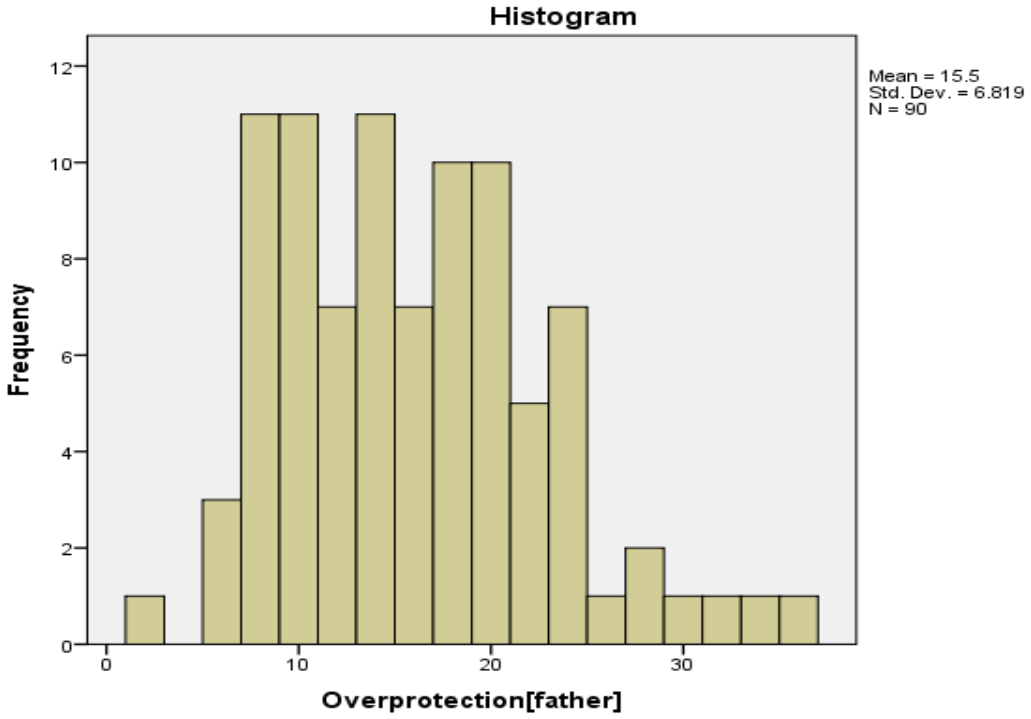


Table 5: Table showing Spearman Correlation between the conflict variable and Imposter Phenomenon.

Correlation coefficient	Imposter phenomenon
Family	.397**
Sex	.231*
Interpersonal relationship	.396*
Self-Concept	.446**

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

A Spearman rank-order correlation was conducted to examine the relationship between various conflict variables and the imposter phenomenon. The analysis revealed significant positive associations across all variables. Specifically, there was a moderate positive correlation between family conflict and the imposter phenomenon, $r = .397$, $p < .01$. A

weaker but still significant correlation was found between sex and the imposter phenomenon, $r = .231$, $p < .05$. Interpersonal relationship conflict also showed a moderate positive correlation with imposter feelings, $r = .396$, $p < .05$. Notably, self-concept conflict demonstrated the strongest relationship with the imposter phenomenon, $r = .446$, $p < .01$.

Table 6: Table showing Spearman Correlation between Attachment style and Imposter Phenomenon.

Correlation coefficient	Imposter phenomenon
Avoidant attachment	.442**
Secure attachment	-.001
Anxious attachment	.489**

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

A Spearman rank-order correlation was performed to assess the relationship between attachment styles and the imposter phenomenon. The results revealed a significant moderate positive correlation between avoidant attachment and imposter phenomenon scores, $r = .442$, $p < .01$, Similarly, anxious attachment was moderately and positively correlated with the imposter phenomenon, $r = .489$, $p < .01$. In contrast, secure attachment showed no meaningful relationship with the imposter phenomenon, $r = –.001$, $p > .05$.

Table 7: Table showing Spearman Correlation between parental bonding and Imposter Phenomenon.

Correlation coefficient	Imposter phenomenon
Overprotective [mother]	.265 *
Care [mother]	-.075
Care [father]	-.227*
Overprotective [father]	.372**

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

A Spearman rank-order correlation was conducted to explore the relationship between parental bonding and the imposter phenomenon. Results showed that maternal overprotection was positively correlated with the imposter phenomenon, $r = .265$, $p < .05$. Conversely, maternal care was not significantly associated with imposterism, $r = –.075$, $p > .05$. Paternal care, however, demonstrated a small but significant negative correlation with imposter phenomenon scores, $r = –.227$, $p < .05$. The strongest relationship was found between paternal overprotection and the imposter phenomenon, $r = .372$, $p < .01$

Table 8: Table showing Gender difference of the variables using Mann Whitney test

Variable	Gender	N	Mean rank	Mann-Whitney test value	Significant level
Family	Male	19	41.39	595.500	.438
	Female	71	46.60		
Sex	Male	19	45.03	665.500	.928
	Female	71	45.63		
Interpersonal relationship	Male	19	41.11	591.000	.406
	Female	71	46.68		
Self-concept	Male	19	40.47	579.000	.343
	Female	71	46.85		
Imposter phenomenon	Male	19	38.50	541.500	.188
	Female	71	47.37		
Avoidant attachment	Male	19	43.13	629.500	.656
	Female	71	46.13		
Secure attachment	Male	19	56.74	461.000	.034
	Female	71	42.49		
Anxious attachment	Male	19	45.66	671.500	.976
	Female	71	45.46		

Care[mother]	Male	19	37.47	522.000	.131
	Female	71	47.65		
Overprotection[mother]	Male	19	54.03	512.500	.109
	Female	71	43.22		
Care[father]	Male	19	43.00	627.000	.638
	Female	71	46.17		
Overprotection[father]	Male	19	51.08	568.500	.294
	Female	71	44.01		

A significant difference was found only in secure attachment (U = 461.000, p = .034), where males (Mean Rank = 56.74) reported significantly higher levels of secure attachment than females (Mean Rank = 42.49).

HYPOTHESES TESTING :

H_a1.1: There is a significant relationship between conflict with respect to family and imposter phenomenon.

Results: as shown by table 5, there was a moderate positive correlation between family conflict and the imposter phenomenon, r = .397, p < .01 , it is concluded that the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

H_a1.2: There is significant relationship between conflict with respect to sex and imposter phenomenon

Results: as shown by table 5, there was a weak but still significant correlation found between sex and the imposter phenomenon, r = .231, p < .05, it is concluded that the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

H_a1.3: There is significant relationship between conflict with respect to interpersonal relationship and imposter phenomenon

Results: a moderate positive correlation was found between conflict with respect to interpersonal relationship and imposter feelings, r = .396, p < .05**.** So it can be concluded that the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

H_a1.4: There is significant relationship between conflict with respect to self-concept and imposter phenomenon

Results: as shown by table 5, a strong correlation was found between conflict with respect to self-concept and imposter phenomenon. $r = .446$, $p < .01$, So it can be concluded that the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

H_a2.1: There is significant relationship between avoidant attachment style and imposter phenomenon

Results: as shown by table 6, a significant moderate positive correlation was found between avoidant attachment and imposter phenomenon, $r = .442$, $p < .01$, So it can be concluded that the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

$H_0$2.2: There is no significant relationship between secure attachment style and imposter phenomenon

Results: as shown by table 6, secure attachment showed no meaningful relationship with the imposter phenomenon, $r = –.001$, $p > .05$. So it can be concluded that the null hypothesis is accepted.

H_a2.3: There is significant relationship between anxious attachment style and imposter phenomenon

Results: as shown by table 6, a significant moderate positive correlation was found between anxious attachment and imposter phenomenon, $r = .489$, $p < .01$, So it can be concluded that the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

$H_0$3.1: There is no significant relationship between care[mother] and imposter phenomenon

results : as shown by table 7, it is found that maternal care was not significantly associated with imposterism, $r = –.075$, $p > .05$. So it can be concluded that the null hypothesis is accepted.

H_a3.2: There is significant relationship between overprotection[mother] and imposter phenomenon

Results: as shown by table 7, a significant moderate positive correlation was found between overprotection[mother]and imposter phenomenon, $r = .265$, $p < .05$, So it can be concluded that the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

H_a3.3: There is significant relationship between care[father] and imposter phenomenon

Results: as shown by table 7, a significant negative correlation was found between care[father] and imposter phenomenon, $r = –.227$, $p < .05$. So it can be concluded that the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

H_a3.4: There is significant relationship between overprotection[father] and imposter phenomenon

Results: as shown by table 7, a significant moderate positive correlation was found between overprotection[father]and imposter phenomenon**,** $r = .372$, $p < .01$, So it can be concluded that the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

$H_0$4.1: There is no significant gender difference in conflict with respect to family among young adults.

Results: as shown by table 8, No significant gender difference was found (U = 595.500, p = .438), So it can be concluded that the null hypothesis is accepted.

$H_0$4.2: There is no significant gender difference in conflict with respect to sex among young adults.

Results: as shown by table 8, No significant gender difference was found (U = 665.500, p = .928), So it can be concluded that the null hypothesis is accepted.

$H_0$4.3: There is no significant gender difference in conflict with respect to interpersonal relationships among young adults.

Results: as shown by table 8, No significant gender difference was found (U = 591.000, p = .406), So it can be concluded that the null hypothesis is accepted.

$H_0$4.4: There is no significant gender difference in conflict with respect to self-concept among young adults.

Results: as shown by table 8, No significant gender difference was found (U = 579.000, p = .343), So it can be concluded that the null hypothesis is accepted.

$H_0$4.5: There is no significant gender difference in the Impostor Phenomenon among young adults.

Results: as shown by table 8, No significant gender difference was found (U = 541.500, p = .188), So it can be concluded that the null hypothesis is accepted.

$H_0$4.6: There is no significant gender difference in avoidant attachment style among young adults.

Results: as shown by table 8, No significant gender difference was found (U = 629.500, p = .656), So it can be concluded that the null hypothesis is accepted.

H_a4.7: There is a significant gender difference in secure attachment style among young adults.

Results: as shown by table 8, A significant gender difference was found (U = 461.000, p = .034), So it can be concluded that the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

$H_0$4.8: There is no significant gender difference in anxious attachment style among young adults.

Results: as shown by table 8, No significant gender difference was found (U = 671.500, p = .976), So it can be concluded that the null hypothesis is accepted.

$H_0$4.9: There is no significant gender difference in care[mother] among young adults.

Results: as shown by table 8, No significant gender difference was found (U = 522.000, p = .131), So it can be concluded that the null hypothesis is accepted.

$H_0$4.10: There is no significant gender difference in overprotection[mother] among young adults.

Results: as shown by table 8, No significant gender difference was found (U = 512.500, p = .109), So it can be concluded that the null hypothesis is accepted.

$H_0$4.11: There is no significant gender difference in care[father] among young adults.

Results: as shown by table 8, No significant gender difference was found (U = 627.000, p = .638), So it can be concluded that the null hypothesis is accepted.

$H_0$4.12: There is no significant gender difference in overprotection[father] among young adults.

Results: as shown by table 8, No significant gender difference was found (U = 568.500, p = .294)., So it can be concluded that the null hypothesis is accepted.

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION

The present study aimed to investigate the effect of conflict with respect to family, sex, interpersonal relationship and self-concept, attachment style and parental bonding on imposter phenomenon among young adults (18-25).

The results of the study showed that there was a significant positive relationship between conflict with respect to family and imposter phenomenon, indicating that individuals experiencing high levels of family conflict, for example, may receive inconsistent emotional support, criticism, or invalidation during formative years. These experiences can severely diminish self-esteem and lead to internalized doubts about personal abilities, contributing to the development of imposter feelings (Coopersmith, 1967).Self-esteem, defined as an individual's overall sense of self-worth and personal value (Rosenberg, 1965), plays a critical mediating role in how conflict is internalized and how one perceives their competence and legitimacy in personal and academic settings. This finding is consistent with prior research by Kumar & Jagacinski (2006), who highlighted the role of family dynamics, particularly parental expectations and conflict, in contributing to self-doubt and feelings of inadequacy. Similarly, Parker et al. (2001) also suggested that negative family relationships can lead to poor self-concept and exacerbate imposter feelings.

Conflict related to sex showed a weaker, yet still significant, correlation with imposter phenomenon, suggesting that gender-related factors may contribute to the experience of imposter feelings. This finding aligns with Sakulku and Alexander (2011), who suggested that societal pressures related to gender roles may lead women, in particular, to feel like they must prove their worth, which could result in imposter feelings. However, McGregor (2022) found no significant impact of gender-related conflict on imposter feelings, suggesting that this relationship may vary depending on the context or population studied.

A moderate positive relationship was found between conflict related to interpersonal relationship and imposter phenomenon, indicating early and ongoing relational experiences could significantly shape one's internal sense of worth and authenticity. When individuals encounter frequent tension or rejection in peer or romantic relationships, they may internalize these experiences as reflections of their inadequacy or unworthiness. Over time, this can result in a fragile self-esteem, making it difficult for individuals to accept praise, trust their accomplishments, or feel deserving of success—hallmarks of the imposter experience (Thompson et al., 1998). Kumar (2017) similarly found that relational conflicts, including tensions with peers or romantic partners, contribute to imposter feelings. Furthermore, Harvey et al. (2019) emphasized how negative relational experiences, especially during young adulthood, shape one's perception of self-worth, supporting the idea that interpersonal conflicts play a critical role in the development of imposter syndrome. However, Hutchins et al. (2019) found that interpersonal relationships did not significantly predict imposter feelings once personality traits were controlled for, suggesting that the influence of interpersonal conflict may be complex and mediated by other factors, such as personality or self-esteem.

A strong, significant relationship was found between conflict related to self-concept and the imposter phenomenon, indicating that individuals with a negative self-view may be particularly vulnerable to experiencing imposter feelings. A conflicted or negative self-concept is often the result of low self-esteem, where individuals hold persistent self-doubt, feelings of inadequacy, and harsh self-judgments. This inner dialogue aligns closely with the cognitive patterns seen in the imposter phenomenon, where success is attributed to luck, and failure is taken as confirmation of incompetence. Prior research has confirmed this link. For instance, Sonnak and Towell (2001) found that individuals with low self-esteem were significantly more likely to experience imposter feelings, regardless of their actual achievements.

Kumar, A. (2017), A study conducted among students at Himachal Pradesh University found that self-concept is a strong predictor of the imposter phenomenon. The research indicated that individuals with a negative self-concept were more likely to experience imposter feelings. Notably, this relationship was stronger among female students compared to male students. This finding is further supported by Miller et al. (2016), who showed that individuals with poor self-concept are particularly prone to internalizing feelings of fraudulence. However, Collins (2017) argued that factors such as perfectionism and anxiety might be stronger predictors of imposter syndrome than self-concept alone. This suggests that while self-concept is important, it may interact with other psychological factors to influence imposter feelings.

The relationship between attachment style and imposter phenomenon was also examined in this study, and it was found that both anxious and avoidant attachment styles were positively correlated with the imposter phenomenon, reinforcing the role of insecure attachment patterns in the development of self-doubt and perceived fraudulence (Clance & Imes, 1978). Individuals with anxious attachment tend to fear rejection and seek constant validation, which can amplify feelings of fraudulence when achievements are not externally affirmed (Jensen & Deemer, 2020). These findings align with Jensen & Deemer (2020), who found that individuals with anxious attachment are more susceptible to imposter feelings due to heightened sensitivity to rejection and fear of abandonment. Similarly, Edelstein et al. (2017) emphasized that avoidant attachment is related to imposter phenomenon, as these individuals often suppress their emotions and vulnerabilities, leading to self-doubt and feelings of fraudulence.

The study found no significant relationship between secure attachment and imposter phenomenon, suggesting that individuals with secure attachment may be less susceptible to imposter feelings. This is consistent with attachment theory, which suggests that secure individuals develop internal models of self-worth and trust in others, which can serve as a buffer against imposter-like beliefs (Bowlby, 1982). However, This finding contradicts Mikulincer & Shaver (2016), who argued that secure attachment may not always protect against imposter feelings, especially in the presence of other factors like perfectionism. Nonetheless, the lack of a significant relationship between secure attachment and imposter

syndrome in this study suggests that secure attachment alone may not fully shield against the development of imposter feelings.

Regarding parental bonding, the study found that care[mother] was negatively correlated with imposter feelings, indicating that greater maternal involvement is associated with lower imposter scores. This supports Li et al. (2014), who found that maternal care is a protective factor against imposter phenomenon, and Shekhawat & Kumar (2023), who noted that positive maternal involvement fosters self-esteem, which in turn reduces imposter feelings.

Furthermore, the study found that overprotection by both mothers and fathers was positively correlated with imposter phenomenon, suggesting that overly controlling parenting may contribute to the development of self-doubt. This is consistent with research by Yaffe (2023), who found that overprotective parenting leads to imposter feelings due to its undermining effect on autonomy and self-efficacy.

In contrast, care[father] demonstrated a small but significant negative correlation with imposter phenomenon, suggesting that greater perceived emotional support and warmth from fathers may be associated with lower levels of imposterism. This finding supports earlier work by Hinduja et al. (2023), who reported that perceived parental responsiveness was negatively correlated with imposter feelings in young adults. Their findings emphasize that when parenting is characterized by acceptance, emotional availability, and encouragement, children may develop a more stable self-concept and stronger internal validation, thereby reducing susceptibility to imposter beliefs.

In terms of gender differences, contrary to some prior research indicating a higher prevalence of imposter phenomenon in females (e.g., Kumar & Jagacinski, 2006), the current study found no significant gender differences in imposter feelings ($p = .188$). This may reflect changing gender roles or cultural and contextual factors specific to the present sample, suggesting that the experience of imposter feelings may no longer be disproportionately reported by women in all contexts. Interestingly, the only statistically significant gender difference emerged in secure attachment ($U = 461.000$, $p = .034$), where males reported higher levels than females. This finding could suggest that men in this sample felt more emotionally supported and autonomous in their close relationships, a factor that may indirectly buffer against imposter experiences.

Other variables, including family dynamics, self-concept, interpersonal relationships, and parental bonding measures, did not differ significantly by gender. These results indicate that although secure attachment levels may vary between males and females, the broader psychological framework surrounding imposter phenomenon appears to be relatively stable across genders.

CHAPTER VI: CONCLUSION

The present study investigated the relationship between conflict (with respect to family, sex, interpersonal relationships, and self-concept), attachment style, parental bonding, and the imposter phenomenon among young adults. The findings revealed that intrapersonal and interpersonal conflicts, particularly conflict related to self-concept and family dynamics, significantly contribute to the development of imposter feelings. Moreover, insecure attachment styles (anxious and avoidant) and overprotective parenting were found to be key predictors of imposterism, highlighting the importance of early relational patterns in shaping one's sense of self and competence. Conversely, secure attachment and paternal care emerged as potential protective factors. Notably, self-esteem appears to be a central psychological mechanism linking these variables to the imposter phenomenon.

Although no significant gender differences were found in overall imposter scores, the study observed that males reported higher levels of secure attachment, possibly pointing to contextual or cultural influences. Collectively, these results underscore the multifaceted nature of the imposter phenomenon, suggesting that early relational experiences and ongoing interpersonal conflicts play a crucial role in its development and maintenance. The findings highlight the importance of addressing insecure attachment patterns and perceived parental overprotection in therapeutic settings, especially for individuals struggling with feelings of inadequacy and self-doubt despite evidence of competence.

CHAPTER VII : LIMITATION

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings.

- ➢ First, the sample included 90 college students with a disproportionate gender distribution (71 females, 19 males), which may limit the generalizability of the results across genders.
- ➢ Second, the relatively small and homogeneous sample restricts the applicability of findings to broader or more diverse populations, such as non-students or individuals from varied cultural or socio-economic backgrounds
- ➢ cultural and contextual factors that may influence perceptions of conflict, attachment, and impostor feelings were not fully explored, potentially affecting the comprehensiveness of the results.

CHAPTER VIII: IMPLICATION

These findings have several important implications.

- ➢ They emphasize the potential for early attachment relationships and parenting styles to shape an individual's vulnerability to imposter feelings.
- ➢ Intervention strategies aimed at improving self-concept and fostering secure interpersonal bonds could be especially beneficial in reducing imposter-related distress.
- ➢ Future research should consider longitudinal designs to explore the developmental trajectory of imposter phenomenon and investigate how cultural, academic, and social pressures may interact with these personal variables.
- ➢ Exploring diverse populations and incorporating qualitative data may also enrich our understanding of the nuanced ways imposterism manifests across different contexts.

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APPENDICES:

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

I am Siuli Khatun, a student of M.Sc. Applied Psychology (Clinical specialization), semester 4, Sister Nivedita University.

As a part of my dissertation research, I am conducting a research study under the guidance of Assistant Professor Ankita Biswas, Department of Psychology, Sister Nivedita University, Kolkata, West Bengal.

The purpose of the present study is to examine the interpersonal factors on self-evaluation of individuals.

I would greatly appreciate your participation in this study, which will approximately take 40-45 minutes of your time. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and will cause no harm. Data will remain confidential and used solely for academic and research purposes. No identifying information will be shared in any reports or publications resulting from this research.

You may choose not to participate or withdraw at any time without any penalty or loss of benefits. This study is intended towards no harm, and neither will the collected data be compromised.

Your honest participation will help in shaping this research. The insights gained will not only help me fulfil my academic requirements but also contribute to new knowledge and findings in this field of research. If you have any questions or need further clarification, you may contact

e-mail: siulikhatun7407@gmail.com

Ph.no: 7407391369

By signing below, you acknowledge that you have read and understood the information provided above and you agree to participate in this study voluntarily.

Signature of Participant: _____

Date: _____

Printed Name of Participant: _____

Signature of the Researcher: _____

SOCIAL DEMOGRAPHICS

Name (initial only):

Age:

Sex: Female/Male/others

Residence: Urban/Suburban/Rural

Family type: Nuclear/ joint / extended

Education:

Socio-economic status: High/ Middle/ Low

Presence of any (diagnosed) physical illness (self): Yes /No

If 'YES' please specify:

History of diagnosed physical illness in the family: Yes/ No

If 'YES' please specify:

Presence of any (diagnosed) psychiatric illness (self): Yes /No

If 'YES' please specify:

History of diagnosed psychiatric illness in the family: Yes /No

If 'YES' please specify:

Questionnaire 1

INSTRUCTIONS: Below are 60 partly completed sentences. Read each one and finish it by writing the first thing that comes to your mind. Work as quickly as you can. Do not spend too much time on each item. If you cannot complete an item, circle the number and return to it later.

1. I feel that my father seldom _____

2. When the odds are against me _____

3. I always wanted to _____

4. If I were in charge _____

5. To me the future looks _____

6. The men over me _____

7. I know it is silly but I am afraid of_____

8. I feel that a real friend _____

9. When I was a child I _____

10. My idea of a perfect woman is _____

11. When I see a man and a woman together _____

12. Compared with most families, mine _____

13. At work, I get along best with _____

14. My mother _____

15. I would do anything to forget the time I _____

16. If my father would only _____

17. I believe that I have the ability to _____

18. I could be perfectly happy if _____

19. If people work for me _____

20. I look forward to _____

21. In school, my teachers _____

22. Most of my friends don't know that I am afraid of _____

23. I don't like people who _____

24. Before the war, I _____

25. I think most girls/boys _____

26. My feeling about married life is _____

27. My family treats me like _____

28. Those I work with are _____

29. My mother and I_____

30. My greatest mistake was _____

31. I wish my father _____

32. My greatest weakness is _____

33. My secret ambition in life _____

34. The people who work for me _____

35. Someday I _____

36. When I see the boss coming _____

37. I wish I could lose the fear of _____

38. The people I like best _____

39. If I were young-again _____

40. I believe most women/men _____

41. If I had sex relations _____

42. Most families I know _____

43. I like working with people who _____

44. I think that most mothers _____

45. When I was younger, I felt guilty about _____

46. I feel that my father is _____

47. When luck turns against me _____

48. In giving orders to others, I _____

49. What I want most out of life _____

50. When I am older _____

51. People whom I consider my superiors _____

52. My fears sometimes force me to _____

53. When I'm not around, my friends _____

54. My most vivid childhood memory _____

55. What I like least about women _____

56. My sex life is _____

57. When I was a child, my family _____

58. People who work with me usually _____

59. I like my mother but _____

60. The worst thing I ever did_____

Questionnaire 2

INSTRUCTION: For each question, please place a **'Tick'** that best indicates how true the statement is of you. It is best to give the first response that comes to your mind rather than dwelling on each statement and thinking about it over and over.

Items	Not at all true	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very true
1. I have often succeeded on a test or task even though I was afraid that I would not do well before I undertook the task.					
2. I can give the impression that I'm more competent than I really am.					
3. I avoid evaluations if possible and have a dread of others evaluating me.					

Items	**Not at all true**	**Rarely**	**Sometimes**	**Often**	**Very true**
4. When people praise me for something I've accomplished, I'm afraid I won't be able to live up to their expectations of me in the future.					
5. I sometimes think I obtained my present position or gained my present success because I happened to be in the right place at the right time or knew the right people.					
6. I'm afraid people important to me may find out that I'm not as capable as they think I am.					
7. I tend to remember the incidents in which I have not done my best more than those times I have done my best.					
8. I rarely do a project or task as well as I'd like to do it.					
9. Sometimes I feel or believe that my success in my life or in my job has been the result of some kind of error.					
10. It's hard for me to accept compliments or praise about my intelligence or accomplishments.					
11. At times, I feel my success has been due to some kind of luck.					

Items	**Not at all true**	**Rarely**	**Sometimes**	**Often**	**Very true**
12. I'm disappointed at times in my present accomplishments and think I should have accomplished much more.					
13. Sometimes I'm afraid others will discover how much knowledge or ability I really lack.					
14. I'm often afraid that I may fail at a new assignment or undertaking even though I generally do well at what I attempt.					
15. When I've succeeded at something and received recognition for my accomplishments, I have doubts that I can keep repeating that success.					
16. If I receive a great deal of praise and recognition for something I've accomplished, I tend to discount the importance of what I've done.					
17. I often compare my ability to those around me and think they may be more intelligent than I am.					
18. I often worry about not succeeding with a project or examination, even though others around me have					

considerable confidence that I will do well.					
19. If I'm going to receive a promotion or gain recognition of some kind, I hesitate to tell others until it is an accomplished fact.					
20. I feel bad and discouraged if I'm not "the best" or at least "very special" in situations that involve achievement.					

Questionnaire 3

INSTRUCTIONS: Please take a moment to consider each of the following statements carefully. We are interested in understanding your feelings about close relationships in general, encompassing romantic relationships, friendships, and family relationships. Place a **'Tick'** corresponding to each statement that best describes characteristics of you.

Items	Not at all Characteristic	Slightly characteristic	Moderately characteristic	Very characteristic	Extremely characteristic
1. I find it difficult to allow myself to depend on others					
2. People are never there when you need them					
3. I am comfortable depending on others					

Items	Not at all Characteristic	Slightly characteristic	Moderately characteristic	Very characteristic	Extremely characteristic
4. I know that others will be I know that others will be there when I need them					
5. I find it difficult to trust others completely					
6. I am not sure that I can always depend on others to be there when I need them					
7. I do not often worry about being abandoned					
8. I often worry that my partner doesn't really love me					
9. I find others are reluctant to get as close as I would like.					
10. I often worry my partner will not					

want to stay with me					
Items	**Not at all Characteristic**	**Slightly characteristic**	**Moderately characteristic**	**Very characteristic**	**Extremely characteristic**
11. I want to merge completely with another person					
12. My desire to merge sometimes scares people away					
13. I find it relatively easy to get close to others					
14. I do not often worry about someone getting close to me					
15. I am somewhat uncomfortable being close to others					
16. I am nervous when anyone gets too close					
17. I am comfortable having others depend on me					

18. Often, love partners want me to be more intimate than I feel comfortable being					

Questionnaire 4

INSTRUCTIONS: This questionnaire lists various attitudes and behaviors of parents. For each statement place a "tick" over the box indicating how much each describes your parents as you remember them in the first 16 years of your life.

FATHER FORM

This questionnaire lists various attitudes and behaviours of parents. As you remember your FATHER in your first 16 years would you place a tick in the most appropriate box next to each question.

	Very like	Moderately like	Moderately unlike	Very unlike
1. Spoke to me in a warm and friendly voice	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. Did not help me as much as I needed	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. Let me do those things I liked doing	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. Seemed emotionally cold to me	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. Appeared to understand my problems and worries	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. Was affectionate to me	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. Liked me to make my own decisions	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. Did not want me to grow up	☐	☐	☐	☐
9. Tried to control everything I did	☐	☐	☐	☐
10. Invaded my privacy	☐	☐	☐	☐
11. Enjoyed talking things over with me	☐	☐	☐	☐
12. Frequently smiled at me	☐	☐	☐	☐
13. Tended to baby me	☐	☐	☐	☐
14. Did not seem to understand what I needed or wanted	☐	☐	☐	☐
15. Let me decide things for myself	☐	☐	☐	☐
16. Made me feel I wasn't wanted	☐	☐	☐	☐
17. Could make me feel better when I was upset	☐	☐	☐	☐
18. Did not talk with me very much	☐	☐	☐	☐
19. Tried to make me feel dependent of her/him	☐	☐	☐	☐
20. Felt I could not look after myself unless she/he was around	☐	☐	☐	☐
21. Gave me as much freedom as I wanted	☐	☐	☐	☐
22. Let me go out as often as I wanted	☐	☐	☐	☐
23. Was overprotective of me	☐	☐	☐	☐
24.Did not praise me	☐	☐	☐	☐
25. Let me dress in any way I pleased	☐	☐	☐	☐

MOTHER FORM

This questionnaire lists various attitudes and behaviours of parents. As you remember your MOTHER in your first 16 years would you place a tick in the most appropriate box next to each question.

	Very like	Moderately like	Moderately unlike	Very unlike
1. Spoke to me in a warm and friendly voice	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. Did not help me as much as I needed	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. Let me do those things I liked doing	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. Seemed emotionally cold to me	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. Appeared to understand my problems and worries	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. Was affectionate to me	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. Liked me to make my own decisions	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. Did not want me to grow up	☐	☐	☐	☐
9. Tried to control everything I did	☐	☐	☐	☐
10. Invaded my privacy	☐	☐	☐	☐
11. Enjoyed talking things over with me	☐	☐	☐	☐
12. Frequently smiled at me	☐	☐	☐	☐
13. Tended to baby me	☐	☐	☐	☐
14. Did not seem to understand what I needed or wanted	☐	☐	☐	☐
15. Let me decide things for myself	☐	☐	☐	☐
16. Made me feel I wasn't wanted	☐	☐	☐	☐
17. Could make me feel better when I was upset	☐	☐	☐	☐
18. Did not talk with me very much	☐	☐	☐	☐
19. Tried to make me feel dependent on her/him	☐	☐	☐	☐
20. Felt I could not look after myself unless she/he was around	☐	☐	☐	☐
21. Gave me as much freedom as I wanted	☐	☐	☐	☐
22. Let me go out as often as I wanted	☐	☐	☐	☐
23. Was overprotective of me	☐	☐	☐	☐
24. Did not praise me	☐	☐	☐	☐
25. Let me dress in any way I pleased	☐	☐	☐	☐